

November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016

## ***This Is Not Art Therapy*** **Artist Resident Announcement: Peter Hobbs**

**Toronto People With AIDS Foundation**  
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Dear PWA Clients, Community Partners, Staff and Volunteers,

*This Is Not Art Therapy*, the artist studio residency program at the Toronto People With AIDS Foundation (PWA), is very pleased to announce the new resident artist to launch the program's second year, Peter Hobbs. Peter Hobbs will occupy the PWA studio from November 7 to December 9 2016.

Peter Hobbs is a Toronto-based artist and researcher who has a long history of creative interaction with community and queerness. For his residency, titled *The PWA Queer Ecospirits Lab*, Hobbs will "work directly with individual clients to develop a creative lab that uses Allan Gardens [Conservatory] as a space of communal importance (historical, ecologically, and spiritually), with the ultimate goal of producing an invocation/séance event." *The PWA Queer Ecospirits Lab* mirrors a significant art-based project produced in collaboration with senior Canadian artist, AA Bronson (co-founder of General Idea), *Queer Spirits* (2008-2010).

From Hobbs' proposal:

PWA's proximity to Allan Gardens can be seen as a pleasant coincidence, offering clients and staff a convenient place to wander off to relax, cool one's toes in the grass, *shoot the breeze* with friends and strangers. But rather than happenstance, this proximity to PWA and the Gay Village speaks to the historical role Allan Gardens has played in shaping queer lives, community, and forms of intimacy. I am proposing to use Allan Gardens as a way to trace queer ecologies: the multiple and varied interrelationships between humans, critters (domestic and wild), and plant life (domestic and wild) which together inform the individual and communal lives of queers.

I am proposing to use the park as a creative laboratory. Much of my residency at PWA will involve taking walks in the park with clients and then returning to the PWA studio space to generate material (sketches, notes, anecdotes, lists, diagrams) that will help us map the queer ecologies and spirits of the park. The ultimate goal is to use the material generated in the *PWA Queer EcoSpirits Lab* to mount a site-specific invocation. [...] I see us engaged in a community-client inspired séance that acknowledges the living and dead spirits that constitute and inhabit Allan Gardens. And while it is difficult to imagine the city would give us permission to perform a queer spirited séance in the dome conservatory of Allan Gardens, I still want to use this image as a shared reference point, as it constitutes an engaging visual node that we can take on as a group and give shape to by spending time in the park, drawing out its fleshy communal spirit.



**Making a posi+ive difference.**

Hobbs recently received his Ph.D. through the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, under the supervision of Professor Cate Sandilands. *This Is Not Art Therapy* heartily welcomes Dr. Hobbs to the PWA studio and community. He will hold open studio hours on Tuesdays from 11am-6pm, and Wednesdays and Thursdays from 11am- 7pm. During these times, everyone is welcome and encouraged to stop by and visit with Peter.

### **About *This Is Not Art Therapy***

*This Is Not Art Therapy* comes directly from a call from the community for a place for art, not art therapy, at PWA. During PWA's most recent strategic planning process, a passionate and vocal group demanded the re-engagement of art and HIV, remembering the bold and transformative works of previous artistic practices—such as that of Toronto-based artist group, General Idea—as a means of HIV expression, education, and activism. The focus on art, and not art therapy, came from the conviction to not “pathologize” PHAs but rather to empower them to take on active roles of expression and engagement through art at PWA.

*This Is Not Art Therapy* is developed by PWA in collaboration with artist Andrew Zealley/Disco Hospital. Zealley was PWA's artist-in-residence from July 2015 through March 2016. *This Is Not Art Therapy* is both a community-based research initiative and the site of Zealley's doctoral research into “artistic responses to the biopolitics of HIV/AIDS.” For more information about Zealley's creative practice, visit <[www.andrewzealley.com](http://www.andrewzealley.com)>. *This Is Not Art Therapy* is generously funded by the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN).

### **Visits with the Artists Residents**

All PWA clients, community partners, staff, volunteers and visitors are welcome and encouraged to come and visit the artist residents to make or talk about art. Peter, our current and first artist resident, will be holding open studio hours on Tuesdays from 11am-6pm, and Wednesdays and Thursdays from 11am-7pm. No appointments are necessary, drop-ins are welcome.

### **Artist Applications**

*This Is Not Art Therapy* invites applications from practicing artists, from all levels and disciplines, to occupy the PWA studio space for a 5-week period and commit to 50 hours (per residency) of direct engagement with PWA constituents (clients, staff, volunteers). The studio is approximately 300 square feet, with sinks/running water, work tables, cupboards, telephone line, and ample wall space. Each residency provides an artist stipend of \$1000. Three artist residency terms are currently scheduled for the 2016-2017 session, of which Hobb's is the first.

From the program guide:

*This Is Not Art Therapy* seeks proposals for 5-week artist residencies at the Toronto People With AIDS Foundation (PWA), one of Canada's largest community-based AIDS organizations (CBAO). During PWA's yearly strategic planning, PWA constituents stated the need for art-making that is not therapeutic in purpose. TINAT therefore removes the goal of “art therapy” from community-

based AIDS spaces, and creates opportunities to build on the rich history of HIV/AIDS art and activism. Each resident artist will engage 3 Art Collaborators from the PWA constituency in art-making activities. Art Collaborators commit to four 1.5 hour weekly sessions with resident artists. This collaboration is the basis of a research project on the health impacts of art-making on people living with HIV/AIDS. Recruitment of the Art Collaborators will not be the responsibility of the artist. The concept/theme of the residency can, but does not have to, address issues of health or experiences of living with HIV/AIDS. The residency will engage the larger PWA community as the primary audience (clients, staff, volunteers, holistic health practitioners).

To apply to the third studio term, Studio 3 from February 20 to March 24 2017, the deadline for proposal is December 16 2016 at 5 pm. For more information about how to apply, please contact Erin Howley for more information at [notarttherapy@pwatoronto.org](mailto:notarttherapy@pwatoronto.org) or (416) 506-1400 ext. 104.

What can you bring to *This Is Not Art Therapy*?

What will you take away from *This Is Not Art Therapy*?

Please don't hesitate to contact Andrew Zealley or Suzanne Paddock, Interim Executive Director, if you have any questions. Andrew can be reached at [info@andrewzealley.com](mailto:info@andrewzealley.com) and Suzanne can be reached at [spaddock@pwatoronto.org](mailto:spaddock@pwatoronto.org) or (416) 506-1400 ext. 204.

Sincerely,

Andrew Zealley  
Co-Principal Investigator,  
This Is Not Art Therapy

Suzanne Paddock  
Interim Executive Director